

Message on the Celebration of Jubilee 2000 *April 7, 2000*

Warm greetings to everyone gathered in our nation's capital to celebrate Jubilee 2000. You can take pride in being a part of this extraordinary grassroots effort to reduce the debt of the world's most impoverished countries. Your work is helping to raise awareness and put this issue at the forefront of the national agenda.

In too many countries around the world today, excessive debt and unwise economic policies divert crucial resources from health, education, environment, and other social investments. Every year, two-thirds of the world's heavily-indebted poor countries (HIPC) spend more on debt service than on health or education. At the same time, basic human needs go unmet. In these countries, one in ten children dies before his or her first birthday, one in three children is malnourished, and the average adult has had only three years of schooling. This is wrong.

Last year, we worked with other creditor nations to reach agreement on a plan to triple the debt relief available for the world's poorest nations. The Cologne Debt Initiative promises to reduce more than 70 percent of the total

debt of these countries, enabling them to commit additional resources to the health and education of their people. Thanks to your efforts and the efforts of a bipartisan group in Congress, we have made significant progress in lifting the burden of debt from half a billion people around the world. This year we must build on that progress. For debt relief to move forward, Congress must take action on my request to cover the remaining cost of the U.S. share of debt relief.

I applaud each of you for your commitment to Jubilee 2000. Let us say today that no nation on this Earth should be forced to choose between feeding and educating children or paying interest on excessive debt. Let us say that no children—no matter where they are born—should be deprived of the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Best wishes for a memorable event and continued success in your efforts.

BILL CLINTON

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 9.

Statement on the V-22 Aircraft Tragedy *April 9, 2000*

On Saturday, April 8, the United States lost brave members of the Marine Corps, who died in the line of duty in the service of their country. They sacrificed their lives in a training accident involving a V-22 aircraft in Arizona. This terrible loss of life is a reminder of how so many men and women in the Nation's military put their lives at risk each and every day, so that we might be a free people and the cause of peace can be advanced throughout the world.

Hillary and I offer our prayers for those we have so suddenly lost and for their family and friends, whose burden of grief is so great. We pray that God may bless them all. Though their names and faces were not known to most of America before this tragic moment, I know that the American people will recognize in their names and faces in the days ahead the genuine quality of heroism.